

**MINUTES OF JULY MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON 24th
JULY, 2023 IN THE COUNTY HOUSE, LIFFORD**

C209//23

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllrs M. Harley, Cathaoirleach, L. Blaney, K. Bradley, C. Brogan, P. Canning, T. Conaghan, D. Coyle, G. Crawford, N. Crossan, T. Crossan, A. Doherty, G. Doherty, L. Doherty, R. Donaghey, M. Farren, M.T Gallagher, N. Jordan, D.M Kelly, N. Kennedy, M. Mc Clafferty, M. McDermott, P. McGarvey, P. McGowan, J. McGuinness, M. Mc Mahon, G. Mc Monagle, A. Molloy, J. Murray, M. Naughton, J. O Donnell.
Online: Cllrs J. Kavanagh, M.C. Mac Giolla Easbuig, M. McBride, N. McGarvey, B Sweeny.

C/210/23

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

John G McLaughlin, Chief Executive, Patsy Lafferty, Director of Housing, Corporate and Cultural Services, Meetings Administrator, Bryan Cannon, A/Director of Roads & Transportation, Garry Martin, Director of Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services, Richard Gibson, Head of Finance, Liam Ward, Director of Community Development & Planning Services, Seamus Hopkins, A/Director of Water & Environment, Eamonn Brown, Divisional Manager, Housing & Corporate, Eunan Quinn, Senior Planner, Paul Christie, Senior Executive Planner, John Mc Feeley, Executive Planner, Roisin Kelly, Executive Planner, Graham Diamond, Executive Planner, John Gallagher, Senior Engineer, Olive Gillespie, Area Manager DCB, Frances Friel, Communications Officer, Seán O'Daimhin, Oifigeach Gaeilge, Dónal O Colla, Seirbhísí Aistriúcháin, William Colvin, Assistant Communications Officer, Anne Marie Crawford, Staff Officer.

C/211/23

MINUTES SILENCE

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr T Crossan it was resolved to hold a minute's silence as a mark of respect and in honour of the late Bobby Bradley, Killea, hero of the Siege of Jadotville.

A minute's silence was observed by all present.

C/212/23

**CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 10TH OF MAY, 2023**

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr Bradley the minutes of the Special Meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 10th of May, 2023 were adopted.

C/213/23

**CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE MAY MEETING OF
DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 29TH OF MAY, 2023**

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr Mc Dermott the minutes of the May Meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 29th of May, 2023 were adopted.

Cllr N Crossan was informed regarding the allegations of wrongdoing made at the 2021 Budget Meeting, that the Councillor concerned had been written to, but that no response had been forthcoming to date. Cllr

Crossan said these allegations needed to be dealt with once and for all and called on the member concerned to issue an apology or produce evidence to substantiate the allegations that he had made. He said the allegations were serious in nature and had cast a cloud over the rest of the members. He asked if a second opinion could be sought and if there were any applicable restrictions which could be used to hold the Councillor in question to account.

C/214/23 **CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON 19TH OF JUNE, 2023**
On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr Brogan the minutes of the Special Meeting of Donegal County Council held on 19th June, 2023 were adopted.

C/215/23 **CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON THE 26TH OF JUNE, 2023**
On the proposal of Cllr O'Donnell, seconded by Cllr Kelly the minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Donegal County Council held on the 26th of June, 2023 were adopted.

C/216/23 **DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT ABBEYVIEW, RATHMULLAN TO OLWEN FRIEL, DEBORAH BAKER AND CLAIRE FITZPATRICK**
Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

On the proposal of Cllr McGarvey, seconded by Cllr Blaney, it was resolved to dispose of lands at Abbeyview, Rathmullan to Olwen Friel, Deborah Baker and Claire Fitzpatrick in accordance with the provisions of Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, (as amended).

C/217/23 **DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT EAST ROCK, BALLYSHANNON TO LIAM COUGHLAN**
On the proposal of Cllr McMahon, seconded by Cllr Kennedy, it was resolved to dispose of lands at East Rock, Ballyshannon to Liam Coughlan in accordance with the provisions of Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, (as amended).

C/218/23 **DISPOSAL OF LANDS AT MEENAVALLEY, ARDARA TO PATRICK & FIONA GALLAGHER**
On the proposal of Cllr Molloy, seconded by Cllr Coughlan, it was resolved to dispose of lands at Meenavalley, Ardara to Patrick & Fiona Gallagher in accordance with the provisions of Section 211 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and under Section 183 of the Local Government Act 2001, (as amended).

MOTION UNDER URGENT BUSINESS – FLOODING IN RAPHOE AND CASTLEFIN

A request signed by Cllrs Crawford, G Doherty, Harley, Mc Monagle, T Crossan, Conaghan, Canning, Brogan, N Crossan, A Doherty, M Mc Mahon, L Doherty and Molloy to have the following motion discussed as urgent business in accordance with Standing Order No. 27 was submitted to the Meetings Administrator:

“I am proposing a motion under urgent business before today’s meeting of Donegal County Council to allow discussion of the flooding event in Raphoe and Castlefin and the Finn Valley area on Saturday last”.

On the proposal of Cllr Crawford, seconded by Cllr G Doherty it was resolved to adopt the motion outlined above and in accordance with Standing Order No 28 to suspend Standing Order No 8 to facilitate discussion on the flooding events in Raphoe, Castlefin and the Finn Valley on the 22nd of July.

Members said that a comprehensive analysis was needed of the situation and consideration given to what was needed in terms of infrastructure to stop this happening again. They thanked all the staff involved in the relief effort and those who had assisted with the clean-up. Sympathy was expressed to all those impacted by the flooding.

A lengthy debate ensued with members raising the following issues:

- Locations need to be identified for the storage of sandbags for use in flooding emergencies. Specific arrangements should be put in place with dedicated suppliers for the provision of sandbags in emergency situations.
- Elements of the Flood Relief Schemes need to be fast-tracked including the installation of a culvert across the N15 at Mc Glynn’s in Castlefin.
- Underlying causes need to be identified and remedied including dedicated management of the issues concerned. Collective approach to be taken.
- Funding must be sought at national level given the seriousness of the situation.
- Highlighted the need for a temporary embankment in Burnfoot as an interim measure.
- Flood mitigation measures in Letterkenny and Donegal Town need to be progressed.
- Lessons have to be learned from the issues that have arisen in Castlefin and Raphoe.
- Gullies need to be cleared on a regular basis.
- Concerns with regard to insurance issues and the lack of available cover in the areas concerned.

- Eircodes should be used to identify locations impacted by flooding and a dedicated response system in place based on this information.
- Proper value needs to be placed on the Fire Department and every effort made to ensure that they are properly equipped and that adequate resources are in place.
- Case needs to be made to advance the flood relief schemes for towns like Raphoe and Castlefin.
- Provision of sliding doors needs to be looked at in the towns most severely impacted.
- Pallets of sandbags should be placed in Castlefin, Lifford, Raphoe and Killygordon given that further rain warnings are anticipated.

Mr Garry Martin, Director Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Systems said that his thoughts were with those homeowners and businesses that had been affected. He paid tribute to all involved in dealing with the emergency.

Continuing he provided an overview of the response effort by the various Council Services. He noted that confirmation of a yellow rainfall warning for Donegal had been put in place at 18.36 hours on the 22nd of July with an unexpected onset time of 18.28 hours until 11.00 hours on the 23rd July. There was no prior warning of an escalated risk for anywhere in Donegal, he added and that such warnings were cautionary in nature and frequent for the county. The Council, he said, would have adopted a proactive approach if they had been informed of an emerging risk.

A detailed outline of the measures put in place was provided and it was noted that the response had been a joint effort with personnel from the Roads, Fire and Civil Defence all involved.

The primary objective in the initial response, he advised, was to ensure the safety of persons at risk and to defend properties from flooding where possible. Clean up efforts and an assessment of the extent of the repairs had commenced, he added.

The Council, he said, had been in contact with the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management, advising of the flooding incidents in Raphoe, Castlefin, Convoy, Liscooley and Killygordon areas. This, he confirmed, had been initiated with the aim of securing potential assistance from the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment for householders and businesses adversely affected by the flooding.

It was hoped, he added, to provide further information to the Departments concerned so as to assist in the activation of these schemes and the relevant details would be publicised when available.

Based on the information received, the Director of Services said that this was a pluvial event in a localised area and could have happened anywhere.

These types of events, he stated, were becoming more common and the 84mm of rain that fell on the 22nd of July was an example of same.

Mr Bryan Cannon, A/Director Roads & Transportation confirmed that Roads staff had no indication of the event and had responded quickly when called upon. He thanked all involved for their efforts including those from other Municipal Districts who had provided assistance.

Details in relation to the chain of events and the impact on the areas concerned would, he confirmed, be passed on to the OPW.

An analysis of the event would, he added, provide an indication as to how response times could be improved. It was acknowledged that there had been significant damage to roads in the Deele and Finn Valley areas and that contact would be made with the Department of Transport regarding funding options. He committed to looking at all the mechanisms within the Council's disposal to assist with the clean-up operation.

The Chief Executive noted that the event had caused significant problems for homeowners and businesses alike and said that he could sympathise with their plight. He thanked the local communities concerned for their input and assistance. There was acknowledgement of the collaborative effort that had taken place. It was important, he added, that lessons were learned going forward. He welcomed the efforts made by the Director of Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Services in getting the various relief schemes up and running. Specific actions, he said, were needed. These included,

- A small representative group from the Council to meet with the OPW given that this was agreed by the Elected Members at the meeting today. This would allow for discussion on (a) all CFRAMS towns/villages currently on the schedule and examine if interim or advance works can be completed including the culvert on the N13 in Castlefin. (b) when the remaining towns /villages on the CFRAMS list will be approved to proceed.
- Discussion needed in relation to all CFRAMS towns on the schedule including the culvert on the N13.
- Clarification needed as to when the towns on the CFRAMS list will be completed.
- Review of the policy for supplying sandbags could take place with a view to local keyholders having access in specific situations.
- Possibility of a pump in Castlefin could be looked at.

Cllr G. Doherty requested that a dedicated Lifford/Stranorlar workshop be convened to discuss the effects of the flooding locally.

Cllr Crawford drew attention to the fact that the culvert in Meadowhill, Raphoe had filled with water and undermined the footpath causing a health and safety issue. He alluded also to the fact the installation of ramps in the Diamond in Raphoe had pushed the water in another direction and premises not previously impacted by flooding had suffered in this instance.

Concluding the Director of Economic Development, Information Systems and Emergency Systems advised that supports for eligible householders would be available through the National Community Welfare Contact Centre by referencing the Donegal Flooding 22nd/23rd July and the Humanitarian Assistance Scheme.

C/220/23 **TO ADOPT THE COUNTY DONEGAL HERITAGE PLAN 2023-2030**
Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above. On the proposal of Cllr T Crossan, seconded by Cllr Sweeny, it was resolved to adopt the County Donegal Heritage Plan 2023-2030.

C/221/23 **TO CONSIDER AND NOTE THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2022**
Members noted the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above. On the proposal of Cllr Gallagher, seconded by Cllr Jordan the Audited Financial Statement 2022 was adopted. Cllr Gallagher asked for an explanation in relation to the €504,000 owing to the Council by Uisce Eireann in respect of central management charges. It was confirmed that discussions were ongoing and that the matter would be followed up and hopefully concluded by year end.

C/222/23 **TO CONSIDER AND NOTE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUDIT REPORT ON THE AFS FOR 2022.**
Members noted the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

C/223/23 **TO NOTE THE REPORT FROM THE DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL AUDIT COMMITTEE ON ITS CONSIDERATION OF THE 2022 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND AUDIT REPORT FOR 2022**
Members noted the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above as required under Section 121(3) of the Local Government Act, 2001 (as amended).

Mr Richard Gibson, Head of Finance confirmed that the Corporate Policy Group had agreed that a workshop with the Valuation Office would take place in early September. Members unanimously agreed that same take place on Wednesday 6th September, 2023 at 2pm in the Council Chamber, Lifford.

C/224/23 **DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL (PRESENTATION OF KERBSIDE WASTE FOR COLLECTION) BYELAWS, 2023**
Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above. On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Crawford it was resolved that the Donegal County Council (presentation of kerbside

waste for collection) Byelaws, 2023 proceed to public consultation.

C/225/23 **TO NOTE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE POLICY GROUP HELD ON THE 22ND OF MAY, 2023**

Members noted the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Policy Group held on the 22nd of May, 2023.

C/226/23 **ENDORSEMENT OF MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COISTE NA GAEILGE HELD ON THE 23RD OF FEBRUARY, 2023**

On the proposal of Cllr MacGiolla Easbuig, seconded by Cllr T Crossan the minutes of the meeting of Coiste Na Gaeilge held on the 23rd of February, 2023 were endorsed.

C/227/23 **ENDORSEMENT OF MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COUNTY HERITAGE FORUM HELD ON THE 5TH MAY, 2022, 7TH JULY, 2022, 6TH OCTOBER, 2022 AND THE 9TH OF FEBRUARY, 2023.**

On the proposal of Cllr Sweeny, seconded by Cllr Coyle the minutes of the meetings of the County Heritage Forum held on the 5th May, 2022, 7th July, 2022, 6th October, 2022 and the 9th February, 2023 were endorsed.

C/228/23 **ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES, SEMINARS OR EVENTS**

Having noted authorisation of representation at a seminar, meeting or event under Section 142 (5) of Local Government Act, 2001, S.I. No. 668 of 2006, Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations 2006, S.I. No. 37 of 2010, Guidelines given by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in relation to the Local Government Act, 2001 (Section 142) Regulations 2010, and the Local Government (Expenses of Local Authority Members) Regulations, 2014(as amended). On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Blaney, it was resolved to authorise any member, if he/she so wished, to attend the following conferences/ events, subject to the normal procedures:

- i. Individual members not exceeding their annual budget for attendance at conferences.
- ii. Payment of expenses for attendance to be conditional on the member furnishing documentary evidence of attendance.
- i. Submission of a Conference Report.

Travel Abroad

- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach at the London Irish Vintage Club in London and Diaspora Event in the London Irish Centre from the 3rd to the 4th of September, 2023.
- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach at the 25th Anniversary Commemoration ceremony of the Island of Ireland Peace Park and Round Tower in Belgium on the 11th of November 2023.
- Attendance of the Cathaoirleach at the Golden Bridges Events in Boston from the 13th to the 17th of November 2023.

C/229/23 **REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AT CONFERENCES/EVENTS**

On the proposal of Cllr Kelly, seconded by Cllr McDermott the following

conference report was noted.

- Attendance of Cllr McMonagle at the St. Patrick's Day events in Rudolstadt, Germany from the 16th to 21st March, 2023.

C/230/23 **REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION – LETTERKENNY CATHEDRAL QUARTER**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above. On the proposal of Cllr Kelly, seconded by Cllr Bradley it was resolved that a deputation from the Letterkenny Cathedral Quarter could attend a future meeting of the Council.

C/231/23 **ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING**

Members unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting for lunch until 2.15pm.

C/232/23 **DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024-2030 – PUBLICATION FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

Members considered the reports circulated with the agenda in relation to the above. Mr Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services said that this was a significant step in the preparation of the Draft County Development Plan 2024-2030 The report, he advised, addressed the findings of the following documents prepared in respect of the Draft Plan text, as agreed by members at plenary meetings on the 24th April, 2023, 29th May, 2023 and the 19th June, 2023:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report (ER);
- Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report (NIR)
- Strategic Water Status Impact Assessment Report (SWSIAR)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Report.

He noted that there had been significant engagement and that cognisance had been taken of members comments and the changes proposed. On this basis, he said, the statutory Environmental Reports had been prepared. Recommendations for Changes to Draft CDP, arising on foot of the Environmental/Technical Reports were contained in Appendix A, he confirmed, and approval was now being sought to proceed with the publication of the Draft Plan for public consultation.

The Director of Community Development & Planning Services in response to a query from Cllr Canning said that the public consultation period would commence in early August and would remain open for a ten-week period. There was, he noted, a sufficient timeframe within this process to facilitate a meeting with Uisce Eireann.

On the proposal of Cllr Canning, seconded by Cllr Naughton, it was resolved taking into account the contents and findings of the following reports to approve the changes to the Draft County Development Plan 2024-2030 that had arisen on foot of the technical reports(as set out in Appendix A) and to authorise the publication of the Draft County

Development Plan 2024-2030 for public consultation in accordance with the provisions of Section 12 of the Planning and Development Act 2000(as amended):

- Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report (ER);
- Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report (NIR)
- Strategic Water Status Impact Assessment Report (SWSIAR)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Report.

C/233/23

DRAFT LETTERKENNY PLAN AND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2023-2029 - PROPOSED MATERIAL ALTERATIONS

Members considered the reports circulated with the agenda in relation to the above. Mr Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services confirmed that the statutory process was further advanced in relation to the Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan, and that the public consultation period had taken place from the 6th of January, 2023 until the 17th of February, 2023 with 61 submissions received. A Chief Executive's report had been prepared to address the submissions received, he advised, and the CE report circulated to members for consideration. It was noted, that as a result a number of material alterations had come forward and these had at this point been considered and agreed as Draft Material Alterations.

Environmental reporting, he advised, had to be carried out on these alterations. Thus, he called on members to consider the Strategic Environmental Report, the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report. Approval was now being sought, he added, to publish the proposed Material Alterations for public consultation and it was intended to bring the final draft of the Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport plan to Members in November 2023.

Cllr Mc Monagle said that he had been of the belief that the lands originally zoned would be going out to public consultation as well. He noted that some of the lands in Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B had not been cited for development. He said that the decision at MD level had been to put the plan out warts and all, including all lands as currently zoned so that people could see what was originally zoned and what was being now being proposed.

The Director of Community Development & Planning Services responding, said that the public consultation period in early 2023 had covered a range of areas including the town centre lands which were part of Flood Zone A & Flood Zone B, and lands to the south of the River Swilly. A significant number of submissions, he advised, had been received during the public consultation period including observations from the Office of the Planning Regulator, the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage and the Northern & Western Regional Assembly suggesting that the town centre lands did require on account of the flooding risk involved to be assessed in a different manner and that there was a need for guidance on the type of development that could be accommodated. As a result, he said

the recommendation was to go out for a further period of public consultation on the basis that there was a material alteration to the town centre lands in that they could only accommodate certain types of development.

Alluding to discussions that had taken place with the members earlier in the process he said that it had been made clear at the time there would be a further opportunity for the public to comment on these lands. This, he noted, had been agreed through the workshop process.

On this basis, it was proposed, he said, to go out to public consultation on the understanding that once this period of consultation has passed and submissions received and considered, that the matter would revert to members for consideration prior to the adoption of the plan.

Cllr Mc Monagle expressed concern as to what would happen if the majority of the submissions looked to retain the current zoning, as it was inevitable, he said, that this would be overruled. He said that the Executive had taken a decision based on the suggestions from the OPR etc and that the members input was effectively being ignored. He noted that the submissions emanating from the initial consultation process had clearly suggested that the lands be left open for development with proper flood mitigation, yet the only proposal in this document was for water compatible development.

Cllr Brogan asked for clarity as to what exactly was going out to public consultation.

Cllr Mc Monagle said it was clear that what the members adopted was not going out to public consultation and that the proposal now was for more water compatible development in the Flood Zone A area.

The Director of Community Development & Planning Services said that it was his clear understanding that what was going out to public consultation was that agreed by members on their consideration of the Chief Executive's report, and that this was based on the Executive's recommendation that lands in the town centre could facilitate water compatible type development. He said that members would have an opportunity to further consider submissions when the next Chief Executive's report issued.

Responding to the contention by Cllr Mc Monagle that this was not his understanding of the situation, the Director of Community Development & Planning Services said that the basis for the material alteration going out to public consultation had been set out clearly in the Chief Executive's report. This, he advised, had already been agreed by the members thus affording the public an opportunity to have their say in relation to water-compatible development.

Once submissions had been received, a Chief Executive's report would be

prepared, he added, and the matter would come back to members prior to the adoption of the plan. He said that submissions for or against would be considered and there would be a further opportunity to raise objections.

On the proposal of Cllr Brogan, seconded by Cllr Kelly it was resolved to approve publication of the proposed Material Alterations to the Draft Letterkenny Plan and Local Transport Plan 2023-2029, in accordance with the relevant provisions of Section 20 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

C/234/23

**SEVEN STRATEGIC TOWNS LOCAL AREA PLAN 2018 – 2024
EXTENSION OF THE LIFETIME OF THE PLAN**

Members considered the report circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Community Development & Planning Services noted that the proposal to extend the life of the plan by 5 years subject to the commitment from the Executive that the review would commence in April or May of 2024 had been before members at the previous meeting.

He noted that that further engagement had taken place at the workshop, on the 20th of July

Mr. Ward said that the Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024 had been the subject of a series of recent engagements with Members and the Corporate Policy Group. He confirmed that Donegal County Council was proposing to undertake preparatory work to facilitate the statutory review of the Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024 commencing in the 4th quarter of 2023 with a planned formal commencement of the process of the review of the Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024 to commence in late spring 2024, following effective completion of the Letterkenny Plan and the review of the County Development Plan. He thus recommended that Members resolve to approve the extension of the lifespan of the Seven Strategic Towns LAP as set out in the meeting agenda.

Cllr Canning said that he was nervous of what lay ahead in terms of the Residential Zoned Land Tax and that the extension of the lifespan could be an issue for many landowners. Starting the process today, would not, he said, be of any benefit in terms of the revenue deadline. He said that the recommendation as outlined by the Director of Services might offer some level of comfort. He noted that the Fianna Fail grouping had met with Minister Mc Conalogue, regarding commentary that lands owned by active farming families would be exempt. The Minister, he said, had advised that he was working with the Minister for Finance, Michael Mc Grath, T.D but that there was no real clarity at this point in time. He expressed concern that a refusal to extend would have implications for grant funding for the towns concerned.

On this basis, he proposed to defer the publication of a notice under

section 20(3)(a)(i) and publishing a notice under section 20(3)(a)(ii) (ie. defer the formal procedures associated with the publication for public consultation of a new Draft Plan) for a further period of 2 years after the elapse of the period of five years from the making of the current Plan. (This would require the publication of the Draft Plan by no later than July, 2025). This was seconded by Cllr N Crossan.

Cllr A Doherty said that Minister Mc Conalogue had recently made it clear that that farmers whose lands were zoned for residential housing would need to apply to have their lands de-zoned if they wanted to avoid paying the RZLT. He said that he had also indicated that it was imperative that a pathway was cleared for those who did not want their lands developed and wanted to actively farm their lands and that an opportunity was provided to allow de-zoning to take place.

It had been highlighted in the recent workshop, he added, that the process of amending a Local Area Plan required the Local Authority to consider amendments on zoning and other objectives. He said he was concerned that it could arise in certain cases that a particular zoning or de-zoning would not be recommended on the basis that the lands were centrally located or located close to local services. He referenced the Churchlands Quarter area in Carndonagh and noted that some of his own family members farmed in this location.

Clarity was needed, he said and a firm commitment that there would be options for those who wanted to farm their own lands.

Cllr Sweeny advised of the importance of ensuring that the risk to future improvements and developments in our towns was not removed due to the lack of local area plans in place.

Cllr Canning asked that further contact be made with Uisce Eireann regarding an exemption (letter of comfort) in respect of the RZLT in respect of those towns with no capacity but where the relevant infrastructure was in place.

Mr Eunan Quinn, Senior Planner confirmed that the seven towns in question were, Killybegs, Donegal Town, Buncrana, Dungloe, Carndonagh, Bridgend and Ballybofey/Stranorlar.

Cllr Mc Guinness alluded to the fact that many landowners in his own area were fighting for the right to continue farming and to get the proper market value for their lands. He advised also of issues in relation to properties that were landlocked and where planning permission had been denied yet they were located in a RZLT area.

Cllr Mc Dermott said it was farcical that people could be charged for land that could not be developed and thus called for strong representation to be made to the Department. He noted that Uisce Eireann had issued letters to developers in Carndonagh confirming that the relevant water

infrastructure capacity would not be in place for at least four years yet the landowners in question would be expected to pay the RZLT.

Cllr Mc Monagle noted that this tax had been initially introduced to target big business and hedge funds which held extensive landbanks. He said that he was not sure just how effective any letter of comfort would be when dealing with the Revenue Commissioners and contended that it was a matter for the Government to provide the relevant exemptions.

The Cathaoirleach alluded to the fact that Phase 2 lands (Strategic Residential Reserve Lands) were also liable for the tax and said that Revenue needed to be made aware of the situation.

The Chief Executive said whilst the Council wanted to be helpful the Council had no power to change things and that all it could do was pass on the supporting information to the relevant bodies.

On the proposal of Cllr Naughton, seconded by Cllr Crossan it was resolved that a request for a cross-party delegation to meet with the Minister for Finance, Mr Michael Mc Grath, T.D and the Minister for Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery & Reform, Mr Pascal Donohoe, T.D. be made with a view to discussing the impact of the RZLT on various sections of the community together with the need for specific exemptions.

Cllr Brogan advised of the need for open discussion but said it was inevitable that the Minister would come back and say that this was matter for the members themselves to decide within their own local area plans process.

The Cathaoirleach said that a list of the relevant issues needed to be drawn up prior to any meeting and a specific agenda agreed.

Mr Eunan Quinn, Senior Planner responding to a query from Cllr Mc Clafferty in relation to agricultural land/farms within town boundaries, confirmed that land has to be positively zoned for housing and if designated "Local Environment" or "Commercial" would not be subject the RZLT as it was not considered within the scope.

Cllr Mc Clafferty asked as to the possibility of holding public information meetings prior to January.

The Cathaoirleach suggested that it might be more beneficial to have the meeting with the Minister first and then send out the relevant information.

C/235/23

UPDATE ON ENHANCED DEFECTIVE CONCRETE BLOCKS SCHEME

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that the Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme was up and running and that staff were working through the guidelines. There were questions, he noted, regarding the interpretation of the scheme and this would involve continued engagement with the Department. One of the

biggest workloads at present, he noted, was the transfer of existing applications to the new scheme.

He alluded to the fact that a Special Meeting had been held a few months ago in relation to the enhanced scheme and that as a result of that a detailed submission had been made to the Department. There had been, he added, good engagement with the Department and a joint delegation had met with Department officials. Further meetings with officials from both bodies had also taken place. It was the intention, he advised, that the joint delegation would continue to meet with the Department regarding the the issues concerned.

He informed members that the Council was anxious to remediate its social housing stock and to this end an initial Project Team had been set up, and indications were that a scheme for social houses would available shortly. Donegal, he said, had also offered to be a pilot area for social housing/vacant houses projects.

At this juncture a presentation on the Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme was presented to members by Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer. He highlighted the roles to be undertaken by Donegal County Council and the Housing Agency in the implementation of the new scheme. He said that the Council's role had changed significantly and would involve the validation of applications, administration of the scheme and the issuing of payments. Engineering, technical assessment, and compliance issues were now, he advised, a matter for the Housing Agency and or the homeowners "competent building professional".

Members were informed that the new online system to accept applications under the Enhanced Grant Scheme was opened on Monday 10th July and seven applications had been received to date. There was, he noted, a significant learning period ahead for all concerned and that this would involve ongoing engagement with the Department. An overview of the processing methods for new applications was outlined and it was noted that once a new application was submitted and the Council satisfied that it met the validation requirements of the Enhanced Scheme, then it would be referred to the Housing Agency for engineering and technical assessment.

It was confirmed that the 1296 applications submitted under the previous scheme would now move across to the Enhanced Scheme under transitional arrangements and an overview of the arrangements for category 1, 2, 3, and 4 was provided.

Mr Gallagher concluding said that the next step was to move forward with new applications using the online application process. He noted that there was no requirement for existing applicants to do anything at present. Letters, he advised, would issue over the coming week to existing applicants and would relay to the applicant's concerned information on the overall transition process and their category of priority. This

correspondence, he added, would also inform the applicant as to what they had to do next in terms of their own application.

A lengthy debate ensued, with members raising the following issues:

- Asked that Stage 3 applicants as outlined in the presentation be dealt with as soon as possible.
- Clarity needed as to how the payment system will work and an explanation on the pro-rata element.
- Schedule 7 to be sent out with the documentation as the update is being issued to homeowners. To issue also when the Remedial Work Plan has been submitted to the Donegal County Council portal.
- Engagement with the Department needs to continue.
- Query as to whether the remedial work plan option on inside and outside blocks need to be done by a Chartered Engineer.
- Update needed from the Housing Agency on the 231 applications passed over to them for consideration.
- Imperative that Architects/Agents are kept briefed on what to include in rebuild applications.
- Clarification needed regarding the definition of a "Competent Building Professional" in the enhanced scheme.
- Is the Building Sector capable of meeting the increased demand for building in the county?
- Remediation of Social Housing must be progressed. Can dedicated timeframe be provided?
- Have sites been identified for the disposal of rubble?
- How will dashed houses / houses that have been aesthetically maintained be treated in terms of the non-invasive visual survey?
- What can be done to assist homeowners who do not want their applications to go to the Housing Agency?
- Options for dealing with semi-detached houses.
- What options are there for apartment owners?
- Cross-party approach and liaison with the Department to continue.
- Workshop to be held with agents and architects regarding material changes to the original planning permission, road access issues etc.
- Clarity needed around the wording and exact meaning of "Exact Location".
- Important that people are aware that the clock starts ticking on the 65-week building deadline as soon as Schedule Seven has been submitted to the Department, and that a request for an extension of time has to be made three months prior to the end of the 65-week timeframe.

Mr Patsy Lafferty, Director Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in response said that it was intended that the cross-party working group

would continue to meet with the Department as this had proved to be beneficial to date. He said that there were challenges generally in recruiting staff but that this was in hand, and that it was hoped to augment staffing resources in the very near future.

It was noted that there was also ongoing consultation with the Department in relation to a possible pilot social housing project in advance of the new scheme.

Mr Lafferty said that there was ongoing consultation with the Department with regard to the overall interpretation of "Exact Location".

Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer, replied in detail to the queries raised by members.

Mr Seamus Hopkins, A/Director Water & Environment in relation to the disposal of DCB material stated that clarification was awaited from the Environmental Protection Agency regarding the classification to be designated to material of this nature.

Mr Eunan Quinn, Senior Planner, said that it was intended to have a workshop with the Architects and Agents before the end of August and that it was intended to make the Defective Concrete Blocks Planning advice circulated recently to members publicly available over the next few days.

The Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services said that he anticipated that the decision-making process going forward would be more streamlined as the Housing Agency determined the damage threshold and the grant approval amount.

The Cathaoirleach thanked the Director of Services, and Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer and their staff for their efforts to date.

The Chief Executive acknowledged the input from all concerned and noted said that the sentiment of the meeting today was more upbeat. He said that the Council was committed to progressing the matter both in terms of private and public housing and that the presentation today offered a more positive look on the situation. He noted that the emphasis going forward would be more on the administrative end and that the role of the Council engineering staff would wind down. The importance of the working group, he said, was clear to be seen and their role had been beneficial in moving matter forward.

He advised that there were still concerns in relation to the new scheme and that not all the Council's requests had been acceded to, but that this was a work in progress. It was noted that Donegal was also part of a special implementation group with other counties but given the extent of the problem in the county there were a range of obstacles to be overcome.

Concluding, the Chief Executive said that it was important now for people to get their applications in and that the results could be seen on the ground. He also cited the importance of ensuring that applications were fully completed prior to submission so that the workflow process could operate in an efficient manner.

C/236/23

DEFECTIVE CONCRETE BLOCKS & COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK – BANKING SECTOR AND DEFECTIVE CONCRETE BLOCKS HOMEOWNERS

It was unanimously agreed given the time constraints involved that only the proposers of the motions would speak to the meeting.

On the proposal of Cllr A Doherty, seconded by Cllr T Crossan it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

Defective Concrete Blocks & Council Housing Stock.

"That Donegal County Council with the Department of Housing and Local Government, fund, prioritise and implement a cohesive & comprehensive housing remediation programme to Council housing stock affected by Defective Concrete Blocks

and

that the Council and the Dept. of Housing and LG further provide the delivery of high quality, environmentally sustainable, new rapid build prefabricated housing using more innovative processes to break the housing logjam in Donegal. (Modular housing)".

It was agreed that the following motion submitted by Cllr G Doherty would also be taken at this juncture:

"That Donegal County Council calls on the Banking Sector to bring forward credible proposals to assist homeowners affected by defective blocks and writes to the Minister for Finance requesting his department legislate to coerce the industry if no proposals are forthcoming".

Cllr A Doherty received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

He said that he had submitted a question back in 2014 asking asked if Donegal County Council had thoroughly tested and examined its own housing stock to assess and ensure that no building had been affected by the contaminant known as muscovite mica. He said that up until recently there had been no comforting information to share with our Council tenants. Today's response indicated that things were moving in the right direction.

It was imperative, he added, that the Special Project Delivery Team alluded to, becomes the A Team, and addresses the pertinent issues for Council tenants. He cited the need to use the statistics referenced in the earlier presentation to further this aim.

There was broad welcome for the fact that the Department was considering the approval of a pilot social remedial programme in Donegal for 60 vacant social homes.

Concluding he asked that the motion be forwarded for the attention of the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Mr Darragh O' Brien, T.D and the Minister for the Environment, Climate & Communications, Mr Eamon Ryan, T.D.

The Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services informed Cllr Doherty that a detailed submission had been submitted to the Department in October 2021 in relation to social homes affected by defective concrete blocks and approval sought to set up a Special Project Delivery Team. This initial Project Team, he advised, had been set up and visual surveys carried out on all housing stock. Now that the enhanced Scheme had been set up, he said, indications were that the social scheme would be rolled out. The Council, he advised was ready to move and proceed with the initial batch of houses, and the team were in place pending a new scheme for social houses.

Mr John Gallagher, Senior Engineer, said that several rapid delivery mechanisms were being looked at involving high quality sustainable housing which would meet building regulations and energy efficiency requirements. The Council was ready, he said, to move forward and talk to the Department in relation to the Rapid Delivery Programme. An update would be provided, he confirmed, and this included conventional build methods. He informed Cllr Doherty that a number of locations had been identified for the location of houses (including Inishowen) but that there had to be certainty that all the issues associated with the acquisition and suitability of such sites concerned were accounted for.

On the proposal of Cllr G Doherty, seconded by Cllr McMonagle it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That Donegal County Council calls on the Banking Sector to bring forward credible proposals to assist homeowners affected by defective blocks and writes to the Minister for Finance requesting his department legislate to coerce the industry if no proposals are forthcoming".

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

Cllr Doherty said that changes to the current scheme provided some relief. yet many people would still be left behind with drastic consequences as 100% redress had still not been provided. There was, he contended, no retrospective redress or provision for the inclusion of foundations affected by pyrrhotite and the flawed standard IS465 remained.

People, he said, were facing increased mortgage costs, with serious issues in relation to the terms and conditions of some mortgage loans. In some

cases, he noted, demolition was triggering enforcement action by the bank. It was, he advised, time for the banking sector to come forward with credible proposals and help the homeowners concerned.

There was no opposition to the motion.

The Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services informed Cllr Doherty that the motion would be forwarded to the Minister as requested and that the issue was one of the key matters to be followed up.

C/237/23

THAT DCC MONITOR, AS BEST THEY CAN, OUTBREAKS OF BLUE GREEN ALGAE IN OUR BODIES OF STILL WATER

On the proposal of Cllr T Crossan, seconded by Cllr A Doherty it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

“That D.C.C. monitor, as best they can, outbreaks of Blue Green Algae in our bodies of still water especially during prolonged periods of warm dry weather and that specific bodies of water might be identified as being most susceptible due to agricultural run off or exposure to effluent escape”.

Cllr T Crossan received a response from the Director of Water & Environment in relation to the above.

He said that he had submitted the motion on foot of several media reports in June and July highlighting outbreaks of blue green algae north of the border. He noted that many areas had been affected including the River Bann, Lough Neagh, Castlerock and Portstewart. It was significant, he added, that the levels of algae at Lough Neagh had not been seen since the 1970s.

The algae, he advised was most common in non-flowing fresh waters and in lakes and ponds. Several conditions such as a dry hot summer could give rise to the presence of the algae, he added, and it was particularly harmful to pets and could cause illness in humans. It was noted that it could not be seen by the naked eye unless clumped together.

Whilst welcoming the response, he said that there were questions to be asked in terms of the sampling and monitoring of the issue and that most of the information received had been applicable to coastal areas.

There were several areas, he confirmed, that did not come into that category, and these needed to be elaborated on.

He called for still waters to be monitored in areas of high agricultural activity.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Mr Seamus Hopkins, A/Director Water & Environment, confirmed that there was a weekly monitoring programme in relation to marine waters

and that this related to our blue flag status. There was, he said, a heightened alert given the reports from the North Coast with staff and Beach Lifeguards keeping an eye on the situation especially in the Inishowen MD given its proximity to the outbreak.

It was noted that there had been engagement with the Marine Institute and the HSE and guidance subsequently issued. In relation to freshwater locations that may not be bathing areas, the water framework, he said, was in operation in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency.

He called on people to be vigilant and report concerns so that they could be monitored. It was noted that there were no reports of blue green algae to date in Donegal.

C/238/23

HOSTING OF A CHRISTMAS MARKET AT ONE OF OUR BEAUTIFUL AND ICONIC PUBLIC PARKS AND SPACES

On the proposal of Cllr Murray, seconded by Cllr Canning it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

“That this Council expresses its pride in its staff for developing, rebuilding, expanding and enhancing our parks and public spaces to such an extent where we have premier visitor amenities in Donegal, and the Northwest of Ireland; - In order to further grasp the potential of our parks to benefit the countywide economy, this Council commits to reaching out to local businesses, community organisations, Fáilte Ireland, Donegal Tourism, Local Development Companies and all other relevant stakeholders, to help facilitate the hosting of a Christmas Market at one of our beautiful and iconic public parks and spaces”.

Cllr Murray received a response from the Director of Economic Development, IS & Emergency Services in relation to the above.

He said that his preferred location for the event was Swan Park in Buncrana, and that local reaction and support for the project had far exceeded his expectations. The fact that park had been restored to its former glory and that the local community were more than supportive, he contended, made Swan Park the ideal location for this venture. He said that he could appreciate that it was late in the year in terms of organising such an event, but the will was there to make this project work. A cross-agency meeting, he contended, was needed so that the relevant funding streams could be identified. The location itself, was, he advised, unique and the potential was there to develop this into an annual event, which had guaranteed local support and would benefit the local economy. It was acknowledged that this was something that could tie in with the local Christmas lights switch on and would attract a considerable number of visitors to the town. He accepted that it was late in the year but that the potential existed to tap into the relevant funding streams. A projected costing of €40k to kickstart the project would be money well spent, he added.

He alluded also to the fact that O' Doherty's Keep was for sale and called on the Council to take it into public ownership to further augment the towns tourism potential.

Cllr Canning supporting the motion said that if the project was to get off the ground, then an events licence would need to be applied for at this juncture and a risk assessment carried out.

Mr Garry Martin, Director Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services advised that there would be substantial costs associated with the initial setup. He said it would be difficult to organise same to a proper standard in 2023 but that it would be possible to pull together an initial meeting to explore options for 2024. The licencing, he advised was another issue that required consideration. Mr Martin advised that there was a strong possibility that this could be delivered in future years if the required funding lines could be identified. There was no opposition to the motion.

Cllr Murray said that he could appreciate that there were difficulties and challenges but said that the appetite was there to move forward in 2023.

The Director of Economic Development, Information Systems & Emergency Services said that the model here was for this to be delivered through the private sector given that the Council did not have a festival delivery team and was not involved in the delivery of such events per say. Their role, he added, was to provide advice and assistance as required by the organisers so that the event could be delivered to the standard required.

Cllr Murray said that if the right personnel were involved then the Council could facilitate the discussion.

Mr Liam Ward, Director Community Development & planning Services informed members that an events licence would be required if the numbers attending were greater than five thousand.

C/239/23

CALL FOR A DONEGAL STAND ALONE GARDA DIVISION IN CO. DONEGAL

On the proposal of Cllr McMonagle, seconded by Cllr Brogan it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That this Council Writes to The Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris who is currently carrying out a review of the Proposed New Garda Policing Model outlining our support and Call for A Donegal Stand Alone Garda Division and that he withdraws the proposal to connect Donegal, Sligo and Leitrim as One Garda Division".

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

Cllr Mc Monagle said that there had been much opposition and discussion, in relation to the proposal. The Joint Policing Committee, and Garda members in Donegal had considered same with the consensus being that the necessary resources were not in place to support an inter-county Garda Division. Other counties, he advised were also opposed to this three-county division. He said that Donegal because of its unique location had additional security concerns in terms of its 93% land border with Northern Ireland and a 1100km coastline which also needed to be policed. Nationally, he noted, Garda recruitment figures had not been met and Donegal was set to lose one of its Superintendents. It was also likely he added that the central Garda base under the proposals would be Sligo.

The Garda Representative Association, it was acknowledged, also had concerns in relation to the resourcing implications. The fact was, he added, that there were not enough Gardai to patrol the streets. He noted that in Letterkenny on occasion there were incidences where no patrol cars were available to respond to incidents. It was noted that Kerry which shared many similar geographical attributes with Donegal had been designated as a stand-alone division.

There was no opposition to the motion.

Cllr Mc Monagle concluding, asked that a copy of the motion be circulated to the Minister for Justice, Ms Helen Mc Entee, T.D and to the Policing Authority.

C/240/23

LOSS OF INTERMEDIATE FOOTBALL IN THE COUNTY AND THE NORTHWEST

On the proposal of Cllr Coyle, seconded by Cllr Donaghey it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That Donegal County Council write to the Football Association of Ireland seeking a meeting to highlight the huge loss that Intermediate Football is to the county and the Northwest and to explore pathways for the return of this tier of football to the Northwest".

He received a response from the Director of Community Development & Planning Services in relation to the above.

Cllr Coyle advised that there had been a strong tradition of soccer in Donegal and that clubs were losing out because of the loss of this tier of football. This he noted impacted seriously on the transition to senior level football. He cited the success of teams such as Cockhill Celtic and Bonagee United and advised of the need to ensure that the standards achieved in the past were maintained.

Cllr Donaghey noted that the intermediate league was valuable stepping stone for players and that the major concern was that standards would be slip in the future.

There was no opposition to the motion.

It was unanimously agreed to forward the motion to the F.A.I for their consideration.

C/241/23 **SECTIONS OF THE N13 THAT ARE NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE**

The following motion submitted by Cllr Bradley was not moved:

"That the sections of the N13 that are not fit for purpose are addressed with immediate effect".

He received a response from the A/Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above.

C/242/23 **THAT DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL INVITE THE HSE TO ATTEND A SPECIAL MEETING TO DISCUSS SERVICES ISSUES**

On the proposal of Cllr McGowan, seconded by Cllr Crawford it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That this Council invite the HSE to attend a special meeting of this full Council to discuss services for the disabled with a focus on young adults day care services in Day Care Centres, services for the elderly in our Community Hospitals across the County and the Home Help Service".

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

Cllr Mc Gowan said it was clear that there were gaps in the service for people who fell into these categories. He noted that many of the services concerned had not opened in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. In other instances, he said, buildings had been closed or repurposed leaving service provision at a critical level. There were, he added, important essential services and families deserved the respite and support that they provided.

Cllr Crawford outlined his support for the motion.

There was no opposition to the motion.

It was agreed that Donegal County Council would write to the Health Service Executive requesting a meeting.

Cllr Mc Gowan said families were at their wits end as many young adults were left without access to services which they desperately needed.

C/243/23 **INSTALLATION OF SWIFT BOXES ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

On the proposal of Cllr Sweeney, seconded by Cllr Kavanagh it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That this Council consider the installation of Swift boxes on some of our public buildings".

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

Cllr Sweeny highlighted the publication from Birdwatch Ireland called "Saving Swifts" and said it was an excellent document from which the Council could garner the necessary information for the installation of swift boxes in some of our public buildings. These birds, he advised, were now a red listed species and their numbers had declined by over 40% in recent years.

He said that there was excellent working going on in terms of reducing our own carbon footprint and as such the installation of such boxes would be a complimentary to this work. The boxes themselves were unintrusive and could be added to new buildings or attached to existing buildings as part of any retrofit works programme.

Cllr Kavanagh advised of his support for same.
There was no opposition to the motion.

C/244/23

SPECIFIC FUNDING PACKAGE TO REPAIR AND UPGRADE CRASH BARRIERS

On the proposal of Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr L Doherty it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"I am asking that this Council call on the Department of Transport to provide a specific funding package to repair and upgrade our crash barriers throughout the county".

He received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above.

Cllr Jordan said that many of these barriers had been put in place only after lives had been lost but were crucial and vital pieces of infrastructure. They were there, he advised, to save lives and their current condition was a major cause for concern. He asked that funding be sought to repair crash barriers on non-national roads specifically and that they be repaired or replaced as necessary.

Cllr L Doherty supported the motion.

Mr Bryan Cannon, A/Director Roads & Transportation said that the Council would write to the Department of Transport seeking funding and highlight the concerns raised by members.

C/245/23

INSTALLATION OF ELECTRIC CHARGE PORTS FOR ELECTRIC CARS WITHIN THE COUNTY

On the proposal of Cllr McMahon, seconded by Cllr Jordan it was resolved to adopt the following motion:

"That this Council look at the possibility of installing electric charge ports for electric cars within the county".

He received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above.

Cllr Mc Mahon said that the lack of electric charging ports was a problem particularly for visitors to the county. He asked what the procedure was for installing same, and what could be done to speed up the process.

He highlighted the lack of ports along major routes and said that it was imperative that additional ports were installed from both a tourist and local point of view.

Cllr Jordan supported the motion.

Mr Bryan Cannon, A/Director, Roads & Transportation said that the Department of Transport had established ZEVI (Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland) to co-ordinate the transition to decarbonised transport. The Council, he said, had ongoing interaction with ZEVI and was collaborating with neighbouring Local Authorities to develop a regional strategy that would ensure the consistency of approach and an alignment of standards as to where publicly accessible charging networks should be installed.

He informed members that there were publicly accessible EV chargers in 19 locations in 14 towns and villages across the county with a further two at planning stage. It was noted that there were numerous online resources available that highlighted the location of these charging ports and their status.

The Council's role, he noted was to provide the locations for siting of such ports but that it was not in the business of supplying electricity. Most of the charging by owners of electric vehicles was generally done at home, he added. Updates on the development of the strategy would, he confirmed be provided on an ongoing basis.

Cllr Mc Mahon welcomed the response and advised of the need to ensure that the facilities for charging, and their locations were adequately highlighted and promoted particularly for visitors to the county.

C/246/23

CATHAOIRLEACH'S BUSINESS

Votes of Sympathy

A vote of sympathy was extended to the following:

- Karl King, Water & Environment, Inishowen MD on the death of his sister, Honor King.
- Shaun Canny, Housing & Corporate, Carndonagh PSC on the death of his mother Bridie.
- Margaret Houston, Housing & Corporate, Lifford/Stranorlar MD on the death of her mother, Kathleen Irwin.

Freedom of the County

On the proposal of Cllr Harley, seconded by Cllr Brogan it was resolved that the Freedom of the County be awarded to Tim Kelly, Kelly Communications, London in recognition of his achievements in the telecommunications industry. It was noted that he had been particularly supportive of the Diaspora and had over the years employed many Irish and Donegal people in his business. Tribute was also paid to his long-standing charitable efforts for the Irish community in London.

C/247/23

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MANAGEMENT REPORT

Members considered the following items circulated with the agenda in relation to the above.

1. Community Development & Planning Services

A. Community Development

- (i) CLAR*
- (ii) Community Recognition Fund 2023*
- (iii) Community Support Fund 2023*
- (iv) Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2023*
- (v) Leader Local Development Strategy*

B. Planning Services

- (i) Conservation Services*
- (ii) Development Applications Unit*
- (iii) E-Planning*
- (iv) Enforcement*
- (v) Planning Policy*

C. Urban & Rural Regeneration & Development

D. Capital Projects Delivery Unit

2. Water and Environment

A. Waste and Litter Management

- (i) Donegal Green Schools Awards 2023 – Celebrating 25 Years of Green Schools*
- (ii) Food Waste Recycling Week (5th-11th June 2023)*
- (iii) Half Price Bulky Goods Events*
- (iv) Free Vape and e-cigarette recycling through the WEEE Ireland Blue Battery Boxes*
- (v) Summer Social Environmental Campaign Topics*

B. County Laboratory

- (i) Public Service Announcements – Professional Users of Pesticides*
- (ii) EPA Annual Report on Domestic Wastewater Treatment inspections*

- (iii) *Bathing Waters 2023 Season*
- C. Flood Relief Schemes
- D. Provision of Non-Denominational Graveyard / Additional Graveyards Facilities

3. Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services

- A. Housing
 - (i) *Social Housing Developments on Council Land*
 - (ii) *Social Housing through Turnkey Acquisition*
 - (iii) *Land Acquisition*
 - (iv) *Approved Housing Bodies*
 - (v) *Ending of Eviction Ban, and ‘tenant in situ’ initiatives.*
 - (vi) *Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme 2023*
 - (vii) *Allocation for 2023 – Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability*
- B. Cultural Services
 - (i) *Library Service*
 - (ii) *Arts*
 - (iii) *Regional Cultural Centre*
 - (iv) *County Museum*
 - (v) *County Donegal Heritage Office*

4. Economic Development, I.S. & Emergency Services

- A. Fire Service
 - (i) *Operations*
 - (ii) *Fire Prevention*
 - (iii) *Major Emergency Management*
- B. Economic Development
 - (i) *€213,000 secured under EU funded TOURBO Tourism Project*
 - (ii) *2023 Tip O’Neill Award Recipients Announced*
 - (iii) *Love Donegal Day – 14 September 2023*
 - (iv) *ALPHA Innovation’s Pre-Start-Up Bootcamp Prepares Donegal Entrepreneurs for Future Start-Up Success*

5. Roads & Transportation

- A. Roads Areas
 - (i) *Restoration Improvement & Restoration Maintenance*
 - (ii) *Local Improvement Scheme (LIS)*
 - (iii) *Other Works*
 - (iv) *Velocity Patcher Trial*
- B. Central Technical Services
 - (i) *Brexit Adjustment Local Authority Marine Infrastructure (BALAMI) Piers & Harbours Programme*
 - (ii) *Greenways Projects*

- (iii) NTA Active Travel*
- (iv) Public Lighting*
- (v) 2017 County Donegal Speed Limit Bye-Laws - Review*

- C. National Roads Office
 - (i) Transport Appraisal Framework*
 - (ii) TEN-T Priority Route Improvement Project Donegal*
 - (iii) A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC)*

The Chief Executive said that if members had any queries, they should contact him directly if there were any queries.

C/248/23

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN DCC

Cllr A Doherty submitted the following question:

Climate Action Plan DCC

Rights of Nature is adopted by D.C.C (Nov.2021 Plenary)

What engagement with other local authorities, relevant agencies, academia, and consultations with local communities has occurred in the interim?

Donegal County Council has also signed up to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. (Nov 2019)

and

Will DCCs Climate Action Plan ensure delivery of the commitments and vision encapsulated in the Pollinator Plan and the Rights of Nature and will the Council commit to work with all border counties and ensure that all community stakeholders are involved in climate decisions that affect them?

He received a response from the Director of Water & Environment in relation to the above.

C/249/23

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY REPORTS OF SICKNESS DUE TO TOXIN EXPOSURE FROM BLUE GREEN ALGAE

Cllr T Crossan submitted the following question:

Have there been any reports of sickness in humans or animals in recent times due to toxin exposure from Blue Green Algae given the increased instances north of the border?

He received a response from the Director of Water & Environment in relation to the above.

C/250/23

VACANT SITES REGISTER

Cllr A Doherty submitted the following question:

Vacant Sites Register

What number of properties are recorded in each municipal district for years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, & 2022?

What is the current number on the vacant site register for 2023 (July)

From each electoral area,

1)What is the current expressions of interest applications received for the vacant property refurbishment grant?

2)What is the current expressions of interest applications received for the derelict properties top up grant?

He received a response from the Director of Community Development & Planning Services in relation to the above.

C/251/23

ADVERTISE FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR LAND FOR GRAVEYARDS

Cllr Brogan submitted the following question:

Can we have an updated report on my motion agreed by this Council to advertise for expressions of interest for land for graveyards and have we had meetings with all church leaders to help address this massive issue?

He received a response from the Director of Water & Environment in relation to the above.

C/252/23

POLICY AROUND ROAD SAFETY, HEDGE CUTTING VERSUS THE NEED TO PRESERVE WILDLIFE HABITAT

Cllr McGowan submitted the following question:

Can the policy around road safety, hedge cutting and challenges facing motorists/pedestrians versus the need to preserve wildlife habitat along our county roads be revisited as the present policy/practices are not working? The growth on grass verges and hedges from spring through to summer is leaving some roads and footpaths very difficult to manoeuvre.

He received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above.

C/253/23

CAN A COORDINATED PLAN BE PUT TOGETHER TO DEVELOP THE POTENTIAL OF THE FINN AND FOYLE RIVERS INTO A BLUEWAY

Cllr McGowan submitted the following question:

Can a coordinated plan be put together to develop the potential of the Finn and Foyle rivers into a Blueway, given that bodies such as the Loughs Agency, National Parks & Wildlife Services together with Derry City and Strabane District Council and Donegal County Council have an ideal product for a Shared Island project?

He received a response from the Director of Community Development & Planning Services in relation to the above.

C/254/23

BREAKDOWN OF THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ON THE SOCIAL HOUSING WAITING LIST

Cllr G Doherty submitted the following question:

Can I have a breakdown of the numbers of people on the social housing waiting list per MD and how long they have been on the list?
Specifically, the number of applicants who have been on the list for the following:

- Less than one year
- 1-2 years
- 2-4 years
- 4-6 years
- 6-8 years
- 8-10 years
- More than 10 years

He received a response from the Director of Housing, Corporate & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

C/255/23

BREAKDOWN OF NUMBERS OF STAFF WORKING FOR DCC PER DIRECTORATE AND MD

Cllr G Doherty submitted the following question:

Can I have a breakdown in tabular form of the numbers of staff working for Donegal County Council per Directorate and Municipal District?

He received a response from the Director of Corporate, Housing & Cultural Services in relation to the above.

C/256/23

WHAT IS THE CURRENT PROCEDURE IN RELATION TO PROCUREMENT OF STREET FURNITURE, BOLLARDS, RAILINGS ETC.

Cllr Sweeny submitted the following question:

What is the current procedure in relation to procurement of street furniture, bollards, railings etc within Donegal County Council? Should a consistent style be implemented and stocked for replacement units?

He received a response from the Director of Roads & Transportation in relation to the above.

C/257/23

MOTIONS FROM OTHER COUNCILS/BODIES

Members noted the motions from other Councils/Bodies.

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Clare County Council communicate with both the Taoiseach’s office and the office of the Minister for Arts and Culture, to lend support to the application made in July 2022 by Ennis and County Clare Soroptimist International, to have the stained-glass image of St. Brigid created by a prominent County Clare female artist, Catherine O’Brien (copy attached), adopted as the official image of the saint in the context of our new St. Brigid’s Day public holiday, which commenced 1st February, 2023; that

this Motion as adopted be communicated to all Local Authorities in Ireland.”

LEITRIM COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Leitrim County Council write to Bus Éireann to call on them to employ more school bus drivers, as the Bus Éireann system is full to capacity. “

SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL

“South Dublin County Council formally backs the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty and urges the Irish Government to support the initiative for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. If passed, a letter should be sent to all local councils and the Minister for the Environment.”

WEXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

“Wexford County Council ceases using the term ‘Halting Sites’ in the County and begins renaming with a name more appropriate to the area. The naming should happen following a public consultation process and engagement with the local community. We also request that this motion be sent to all Councils throughout the country for consideration.”

WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL

“That Wicklow County Council write to Minister McConalogue requesting him to contact all Dáil party leaders and MEPs to remind them of their own declarations on the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency and their commitment to youth and community groups, made in 2019, and more recently to the 2 Citizens Assemblies (adult & youth), regarding the restoration of nature as a matter of urgency, and that consultation takes place with farmers, foresters, community groups and other stakeholders to discuss any issues relevant to them. Furthermore, that Wicklow County Council writes to all party leaders urging them to work together with their MEPs to pass a strong EU Nature Restoration Law without delay. If passed, we request that Wicklow County Council forwards this motion to all City & County Councils without delay.”

This concluded the business of the meeting.

